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Agency News

Fallen Officers honored at annual memorial ceremony

The 18th Annual Fallen Officers Memorial ceremony was held on May 5 at the Sesquicentennial Plaza at the Texas Prison Museum in Huntsville. The ceremony, held to honor staff who lost their lives in the line of duty, served as an opening event for the 2017 National Correctional Officers and Employees Week.

This year's memorial service held special significance as TDCJ honored the loss of Correctional Officer Mari Anne Johnson. On July 16, 2016, CO Johnson was killed when she was attacked by an offender while performing her duties at the Robertson Unit in Abilene. The event's keynote speaker, TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier, commented on Officer Johnson's sacrifice, saying "The State of Texas lost a dedicated public servant, her colleagues lost a friend, and her children lost a mother. Officer Johnson left this world too soon."

During the Fallen Officers Memorial ceremony, young live oak trees are planted around the perimeter of the Plaza as a living memorial of those we've lost throughout the year. Officer Johnson's tree will join 70 others already planted on the Plaza grounds. "It's



Telford Unit employees and guests release balloons at a May memorial ceremony for unit employees who have passed away, including Correctional Officer Timothy Davison who lost his life due to an offender assault.

with great sorrow we will plant another tree today," Collier added. "The memorial behind me and those trees dotting this property are a constant reminder of extraordinary sacrifice made while performing daily acts of heroism."

Similar memorial ceremonies were held around the state and around the country during National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, including one at the Telford Unit held in honor of Timothy Davison who lost his life due to an offender assault in 2015. Staff and guests released balloons

to honor the 45 Telford employees who have passed away since the unit opened in 1995.

The week also allowed for celebration of the sustained hard work and dedication of the men and women who work for TDCJ throughout the state, and units were encouraged to hold luncheons and activities to celebrate and show appreciation for the work done by TDCJ employees every day. Texas Board of Criminal Justice Chairman Dale Wainwright acknowledged this dedication during the Memorial Ceremony, noting that "The individuals who work with our of-

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fenders are the backbone of the operations of this agency. Their dedication to protecting the offenders, their fellow employees, and the citizens of Texas is an inspiration.” The Texas House of Representatives also honored the vital public service provided by correctional officers and employees by voting to adopt House Resolution No. 1779 authored by House Corrections Committee Chairman James White. ●

**TDCJ mourns the passing of
Correctional Officer Shana Tedder.**

*See Saluting Employees article,
this issue.*



Members of TDCJ's Correctional Institutions Division Region IV Honor Guard present the Missing Officer's Table during the Fallen Officers Memorial Ceremony held in Huntsville.